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ABSTRACT

This study documents findings concerning rural planning of the six-year MIDNY pilot project in community resource development. Subject headings are: Setting; Planning For Rural Areas (Background); Rural Planning Lessons From The Central N. Y. Experience. Results show that no organization or agency working alone can be as effective as several working together. Experience indicates that rural concerns can be meshed into institutionalized planning process and that more significant reforms, such as developing new planning processes and including non-traditional planners on planning staffs, may be possible. (Author/NF)

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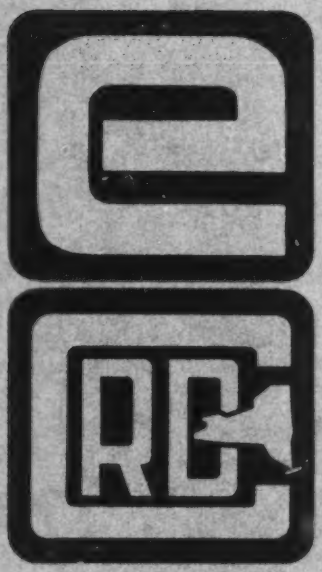

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MIDNY -- Case Study # 2
An Effective Process for RURAL PLANNING

by

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AN EFFECTIVE PROCESS FOR RURAL PLANNING[1].

by

Martin G. Anderson and Ralph A. Catalano

CONCLUSIONS

Results of the MIDNY pilot program in Central New York indicated that rural concerns can be meshed into institutionalized planning, providing those holding such concerns can effectively plug into county and regional planning processes utilized by professional planners.

However, experiences in the six year effort pointed to the desirability of greater flexibility in planning processes, when planning is expanded from an urban oriented focus to counties and regions. The project also demonstrated a need for vastly more involvement of non-traditional planners, either on planning staffs or available in a counseling capacity concerning natural resource management and economic problems of rural areas.

Community education, as carried out by Cooperative Extension's MIDNY Project in the five county region, helped focus attention on rural problems. It provided opportunities for productive interaction between professional planning offices and numerous agencies and organizations concerned with rural interests.

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1. Summary of a paper presented to the third annual meeting of the Community Development Society, Columbus, Ohio, August 1, 1972.

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Presentation was made by Anderson, based on a paper that he and Dr. Catalano prepared jointly. The sixteen page mimeograph report is available from either author as MIDNY---Case Study #2, An Effective Process for RURAL PLANNING.

PLANNING FOR RURAL AREAS

Background

Despite the systemic relationship between the "urban crisis" and the little publicized problems of rural areas, professional planners have given little attention to rural areas. Also, planners in the past have given little consideration to the interrelationship between the city and its rural hinterland. This oversight is not a result of inadequate information, as geographers, economists, and others have written on it extensively.

Rather this lack of sensitivity seems to be inherent in two factors: a) the planners' roots in architecture, and b) planning's reform ethic of the late 19th and early 20th century, which focused on aleviating the political and physical corruption of the American city.

City planning in America very early became the "City Beautiful Movement". This focus, fed by prominent planners of the early 20th century, developed a preoccupation with the aesthetic impact of the man-made environment, which planning inherited from its architectural forebearers. With this bias, the "comprehensive plan" considered primarily physical determinants, focusing especially on an orderly arrangement of urban land uses.

Simultaneously, social reformers tended to see the city as the source of all evil, and the rural areas as the faunt of all virtue. Rural areas were viewed by planners as "undeveloped land" or "open space", rather than vital element in the whole system that was a city-hinterland unit. The assumption that rural areas were healthy bastions of American individualism was fortified by the early conservation movement. This movement was championed by the natural resource professionals, whose intent was to preserve rural areas from urban corruption.

Planners' preoccupation with the city was reinforced and institutionalized in the past decade by the creation of the "701" program. This program created a great demand for planners, and a proliferation of planning schools which taught skills and theories germaine to 701 planning.

The Challenge:

Recent legislation, focusing on problems of non-metropolitan regions has revealed a lack of knowledge and experience in rural planning. Insight into non-metropolitan planning is critically needed. Politicians, interest groups, and others have applied pressure to change traditional planning processes to better meet speical needs of rural areas.

Also planners, and other professionals concerned with natural resources in rural areas, have recently attempted to team up to plan comprehensively for entire regions, recognizing the interrelationship between the city and its hinterlands. While seemingly desirable, these efforts have frequently been frustrated by conflicting ideologies and incompatible agency goals and objectives.

For example, planners and community educators in the Central New York experiment soon discovered that comprehensive planning and community development are different processes. Planning is a city born concept,designed especially to control and direct impending growth. Community development in this country has frequently been utilized in rural areas, often designed to stimulate economic growth and development in communities bypassed by progress. Because of differences in operational techniques, formal training of the professionals involved, and the differing ideology and theoretical underpinning, these two processes frequently are in conflict.

Essentially the MIDNY experience demonstrated that a combination of comprehensive planning and community education, going on simultaneously but independently, was effective. It utilized advantages of each phenomenon. The key to success was close working relationship, and forced linkages between the two processes on a problem basis.

Community Education Can Play a Role:

The MIDNY experience indicates that traditional planning processes will fall short of meeting needs of rural areas. Also, commonly used implementation tools---land use zoning, building codes, subdivision regulations, etc.---have little relevance to many rural settings. They will meet strong resistance when applied to problems of declining economic growth, insufficient services, inadequate public facilities, etc.

Central New York experiments indicate that public education can be used to raise the consciousness of a community to the point where it recognizes and seeks to activate its self-interests in public decision making. Leaders of rural interest groups must be sensitized to the fact that public planning is crucial to their interests; that today's planning decision percipitates the forces which create tomorrow's crises. This was essentially the role of the MIDNY Project in its six year pilot effort.

The MIDNY Approach:

The MIDNY approach capitalized on a recognition that elected officials and other leaders of small communities, made day to day incremental decisions. The decision making process utilized in rural areas required a constant flow of information, on a problem by problem basis---as contrasted to the "master plan" approach.

MIDNY's educational activities brought together, on crucial regional issues, persons who could influence decisions from six distinct vantage points---that of promotion, service, regulation, financing, education, and planning. Numerous agency ad hoc committees from among these disciplines functioned constantly, interacting with planning staffs on a broad array of problems. These committees guided activities of Cooperative Extension, and other out-of-school educational efforts.

Though it operated in an urbanizing region, the Central New York development model seemed adaptable to non-metropolitan regions. This belief was strengthened by a special study conducted in Southern Illinois near the conclusion of the MIDNY pilot program (see Case Study #11).

Community education in Central New York triggered a significant increase in relevant communication among elected officials, planning offices, local organizations, and agency professionals. This fostered a working rapport and trust for planning. Planning itself was altered by this increased interaction, and became acceptable to a variety of organizations and agencies that worked with rural people.

This, in turn, improved public decisions that local leaders made in legislative deliberations, and the day to day operation of programs. Focus was diverted from "the plan", to the process of planning as a way to deal with issues and every day community problems.

MIDNY's experiences indicate that planners in non-metropolitan areas must address a planning process to perceived needs of rural leaders, and tailor it to their way of solving problems. In other words, planning must be flexible to fit existing decision making processes of rural communities, and facilitate the involvement of many service agencies and interest groups.

Results of the Central New York experience, written up in a series of case studies and working papers on specific educational activities, would prove helpful to others struggling with the problem of developing an effective planning process for rural regions.

INDEX

INDEX i

SETTING 1

Conclusion 1

Procedure 1

Situation 2

PLANNING FOR RURAL AREAS (Background) 3

Introduction 3

The Early Planning Movement 4

Planning Reform Ethic 5

Institutionalizing Planning's Bias 6

Opening Up The Planning Office 6

A Possible Solution 9

RURAL PLANNING LESSONS FROM THE CENTRAL N.Y. EXPERIENCE 10

Background 10

Some Problems Encountered 12

A Process Emerges 13

Description of Model Diagram 15

AN EFFECTIVE PROCESS FOR RURAL PLANNING[1]

by
Martin G. Anderson and Ralph A. Catalano

SETTING

CONCLUSION

Experience of the six year MIDNY pilot program seems to indicate that rural concerns can be meshed into the institutionalized planning process. For this to happen those holding such concerns must understand the nature of the decision making environment in which planning functions.

Planners themselves, despite their urban bias, seemed capable of accommodating the rural interests, when those representing such interests were added to the planners universe of groups to be considered. This was made possible because the community educational function of the MIDNY project provided the crucial educational nexus between the planning "community" and the representatives of rural interests.

The encouraging results of this convergence may indicate that more significant reforms, such as developing new planning processes and including non-traditional planners on planning staffs, may indeed be possible.

PROCEDURE

This paper has a dual purpose. As Case Study #2, it documents the findings concerning rural planning, of the six year MIDNY pilot project in community resource development. As such, it is one of 30 termination papers, describing results of all major educational efforts carried out by the project in the five county Central New York region---rural planning, agricultural preservation, low income housing, poverty, environmental education, etc.[2].

Also the paper, in abbreviated form, was presented by Anderson to the annual Community Development Society meeting in Columbus, Ohio, August 1, 1972. It provided focus for a group discussion on potentials for planning in rural areas.

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1. Paper presented to the third annual meeting of the Community Development Society, Columbus, Ohio, August 1, 1972.
Martin G. Anderson, Cooperative Extension Specialist, Community Resource Development, Cornell University, 813 Kemper Bldg., Syracuse, N.Y. 13202.
Ralph A. Catalano, Assistant Professor, University of California, Irvine, Calif.
2. For a brief description of project and bibliography of papers, contact the MIDNY office, or Cooperative Extension - CRD, East Roberts Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850.

This paper contains contributions from each author. It includes a detailed description of comprehensive planning's response to rural problems and the challenge ahead, based on Catalano's intensive research and experience in Central New York. The paper also reflects Anderson's six years of experience with the MIDNY Project, which was an extensive experiment in the use of community education in support of comprehensive regional planning.

Finally, the paper, including a one-page discussion guide (see appendix), was made available to members of the discussion group at the Community Development Society meeting. Copies of the paper are available on request from the authors.

SITUATION

Recent legislation, focused on problems of nonmetropolitan regions, has drawn attention to the need for effective processes for planning in rural areas. It also has brought to light some basic differences between techniques traditionally used by community developers in rural and small community situations, and those used by planners in city and metropolitan planning.

Those differences in techniques and philosophies became obvious early in the Central New York experiences, resulting from close working relationship built up among professionals involved in the two disciplines of community development and comprehensive planners. At a June 4, 1968 regional leadership conference on "Communities of Tomorrow", several questions were raised on the relationship of comprehensive planning to out-of-school education---as carried out by Cooperative Extension and continuing education programs at several colleges and universities in the region. Leaders asked whether community development and comprehensive planning were not the same thing, and what approaches are used by educational institutions which differ from those utilized by planning boards of governmental bodies.

Professor Alan J. Hahn, Extension Associate of the MIDNY Project at the time, responded to these "identity" problems. He developed a paper in late 1968 which was circulated widely throughout the region as MIDNY Memo #7.[3] Hahn pointed out that planning and community development are different processes, derived from different backgrounds, and having a different set of ideologies. Yet they are generally seen as having somewhat common objectives.

This MIDNY Memo related the city-born concept of comprehensive planning to the various approaches which had been used over the years in rural areas, sometimes defined under a general term of community development. It became the basis for the MIDNY Project's relationship

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3. Hahn, Dr. Alan J.; COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING Extension Associate, Consumer Economics, College of Human Ecology, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850; an abstract of an article by Dr. David Popenoe from the Journal of American Institute of Planners, XXX111, #4, pp. 259-265.

to comprehensive planners in the several years to follow. Essentially the MIDNY experience demonstrated that, "...a combination of comprehensive planning and community education going on simultaneously but somewhat independently, seemed effective. It utilized the advantages of each phenomenon. The key to success seemed to be very close working relationship and forced linkage on a problem basis."[4] (Also see attached Conclusion--The Central New York Experience)

Community education in Central New York, undertaken by continuing education centers at several universities and Cooperative Extension at the county and regional levels, took a variety of forms. It was directed to obvious planning weaknesses---as planning expanded from a city process to the relatively large five county region:

1) To publicize regional planning and solicit involvement.
2) Leadership seminars on planning processes, borrowing initially from ideas developed by Dr. John S. Bottum of Ohio State University, and others---utilizing funds under Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965.[5]
3) In-depth workshops to train local planning board members in the process of comprehensive planning.
4) Meetings, workshops, seminars, bus tours, newsletters, etc. to a broad cross-section of regional leaders, to introduce the kinds of problems which planners deal with in comprehensive planning---and to increase communication among planning staffs and a variety of agencies and organizations.

In time, the fourth approach above became most productive for Cooperative Extension, and characterized the nature of educational activities during the last several years of the project. This will be expanded later in this report following the background statement.

The background statement was developed by Catalano, to pinpoint some rural planning shortcomings which dictate a need for increased educational input, and a closer working relationship between planning and other governmental functions.

PLANNING FOR RURAL AREAS
(Background)

INTRODUCTION

Professional planners have all but ignored the rural areas of this land despite the systemic relationships between the much bemoaned "urban crisis" and the little publicized problems of rural America.

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4. From a paper presented June 22, 1972 by the author and Central New York Regional Planning Director, Robert C. Morris, to a workshop in Williamsburg, Va., Teamwork for Nonmetropolitan Planning, sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service and American Institute of Planners.
5. Bottum, John S., Cooperative Extension Leader - CRD, Ohio State University; COMMUNITY SEMINARS FOR OPPORTUNITIES, a mimeograph describing leadership seminars conducted in 1967-68. (Bottum is now project leader for the community and rural development efforts of the Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.)

This assertion will come as no surprise to those whose jobs have brought them in contact with our agricultural areas and small rural towns where there has been little effort made by publically supported planning programs to diagnose and prescribe for physical, social and economic problems.

How did it happen that planners have become so insensitive to the interrelationships between a city and its rural hinterland? Is there any excuse for this gross oversight in light of existing research dealing with, and knowledge of, these interrelationships? How can the rural areas become better represented in public plans and decision-making processes?

These are the questions this paper will attempt to begin to answer. The almost incredible ignorance of systemic relationships between city and rural hinterland demonstrated by the American planning profession until very recent years can be attributed to two factors. The first is planning's roots in architecture.

THE EARLY PLANNING MOVEMENT

The city planning movement in this country began in earnest with the Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893. The exposition grounds were designed by Daniel Burnham, a charismatic architect dedicated to expanding the concern for order and aesthetics from the single building to entire cities. He directed a team, which included landscape architects as well as artists, and which produced an exposition facility which resembled in style the classical architecture of the European capitals.

James Coke has written of the Columbian Exposition:

> (It) was...a tour de force. Beginning in 1890, a group of the nation's most prominent designers hammered out a unified plan. Frederick Law Olmstead was the consulting landscape architect. Daniel Burnham and John Root were retained as consulting architects. The noted sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, advised on the execution of fountains and statues. Although Louis Sullivan condemned the classical style of the exposition as a "virus" it was an immediate popular success.[6]

Quoting from John Reps, Coke continues:

> The Chicago Fair of 1893 changed the architectural taste of the nation and led to a new direction in American city planning. The sight of the gleaming white buildings disposed symetrically around the formal court of honor, with their domes and columns echoing the classic buildings of antiquity, impressed almost every visitor.[7]

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6. James Coke, "Antecedents of Local Planning" in Principles and Practice of Urban Planning, ed. by William Goodman. (Washington, D.C.: International City Managers Association, 1968). p. 19
7. Ibid.

Unfortunately, the early American planning movement continued to be dominated by architects who, inspired by the Chicago Exposition, focused their concern on aesthetics.

City planning in America, as a result, became the "City Beautiful Movement," and was dominated by such men as Frederick Olmstead, Sr., the landscape architect responsible for the design of Central Park in New York City. Certainly these early planners were aware of the complexity of the city's relationship with its hinterland, and strove to understand it more fully. At best, however, they were romantics who viewed the city as a pre-industrial town, and, in most cases, were physical determinists.

This preoccupation with the aesthetic impact of the man-made environment, which planning inherited from its architectural forebearers, was reflected in the "master planning" movement of the 20th Century. Despite the title of "comprehensive plan," most plans during this period were concerned only with the orderly arrangement of urban land uses. When a plan occasionally went beyond the urbanized area to consider rural areas, they were seen only as "underdeveloped lands" or "open space" rather than vital elements in the whole system that was a city-hinterland unit.

PLANNING'S REFORM ETHIC

A second force acting on the American planning movement to narrow its focus on the city alone was the reform movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The whole object of the reform movement was to alleviate the political and physical corruption of the American city. The overcrowded conditions and political machines created by the great immigrations from Europe were anathema to the puritanical, white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant American middle class.

The reformers tended to see the city as the source of all evil and the rural areas as the fount of all virtue. Witness the following passage from James Bryce's The American Commonwealth:

> There is no denying that the government of cities is the one conspicuous failure of the United States.... American often reply to the criticisms which Europeans pass on the faults of their State legislatures and the shortcomings of Congress by pointing to the healthy efficiency of their rural administration which enables them to bear with composure the defects of the higher organs of governement.[8]

Indeed, this anti-urbanism - pro-agrarianism which manifested itself in the reform movement is deeply etched in the American psyche. American intellectuals and men of letters including Jefferson, Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Poe, James, Howells, Dreiser, Dewey, Frank Loyd Wright and many others, have denegrated the city and expressed a preference for agrarian life.

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8. James Bryce, The American Commonwealth (Chicago: Serget and Co. 1891). p. 637

The effect of the reform and anti-urban ethos on planners, many of whom were themselves middle-class reformers, was to rivet their attention on urban problems. The rural areas were assumed to be healthy bastions of American individualism.

The early conservation movement also should bear much of the blame for allowing planners to ignore such seemingly extra-urban considerations as preservation of prime agricultural land, development of flood plains, protection of watersheds and open space, as well as maintenance of the viability of small towns. The conservationists were, however, populist individualists who saw planning as a Bolshevik plot.

INSTITUTIONALIZING PLANNING'S BIAS

The planner's preoccupation with the city was reinforced and institutionalized when the Federal government created the "701" program, which required any community applying for Federal funds under grant-in-aid programs to complete a comprehensive plan conducted by professional planners. These "comprehensive" plans, as previously noted, were not very comprehensive given their paucity of analysis of a community's interrelationships with surrounding rural areas.

The "701" program, due to the Federal government's reimbursement of at least 3/4 the cost of the planner's fee for drawing up the comprehensive plan, created a great demand for planners and a proliferation of planning schools. Planning education, however, taught only those skills and theories germaine to the profitable "701" planning program. As is always the case, "He who pays the piper calls the tune" -- the tune in planning's case was the old theme of "comprehensive city planning."

In recent years, planners have begun to look beyond the city limits, but only when moved to do so by the carrot dangled by Federally financed regional planning programs and the stick swung by the environmentalists, irrate taxpayers, and an increasingly sophisticated citizenry.

OPENING UP THE PLANNING OFFICE

Is there an existing knowledge base upon which public planning efforts can draw in an attempt to become competent in prescribing for the urban-rural unit? Planners are ill prepared to undertake this new charge due to their traditional city-oriented education. They must not, however, be allowed to plead ignorance while continuing to spend public resources. While planners wait for a new generation of brethren to emerge from the "new planning" schools to augment the traditional staff, they should be forced, despite their guildest leanings, to swell their ranks with those trained in other disciplines and professions. Other disciplines--economics and geography, for example, have traditionally viewed the city and its rural hinterland as one unit. There is, in other words, adequate existing knowledge to ensure competent expanded planning efforts. This knowledge must, however, come from other fields than traditional planning.

Economicsts have, since at least the 18th century, been concerned with the interrelationships between city and rural areas.

Typical of the work of these early "political econimicst," as they were called, was James Steuart's An Inquiry Into the Principles of Politcal Economy, first publicshed in 1772.

Steuart first lays out what has become known as the "Theory of Agricultural Primary." He writes:

> ...it is plain that the residence of the farmers only is essentially attached to the place of cultivation...the other class of inhabitants; the free hands who live upon the surplus of the farmers...I must subdivide into two conditions. The first, those to whom this surplus directly belongs, or who, with a revenue in money already acquired, can purchase it. The second, those who purchase it with their daily labour or personal service....
>
> Those of the first condition may live where they please; those of the second, must live where they can. The residence of the consumers determines, in many cases, that of the suppliers. In proportion, therefore, as those who live where they please choose to live together, in this proportion must the others follow them.[9]

Steuart posits further that the proportion of a country's population that can live in cities is a function of the fertility of that country's agricultural land. The more fertile the land, the smaller the size of the labor force needed to work it, and the larger the proportion of the population free to congregate in the city.

What drew people to the city, according to Steuart, was wealth. In the first instance, the princes, whose courts were located in the city, became wealthy through foreign trade. The luxury of the court soon attracted the attention of the great landowners who built town-houses to be closer to the prince and his wealth. In order to maintain these town residences, the lords had to convert some of their holdings into cash. This conversion included allowing vassals to purchase their freedom, thereby creating a class of freemen which went immediately to the city. The cash thereby raised was spent in the cities to maintain the ostentatious life-style of the lord and to support his hangers-on. This currency, available in the city in exchange for services and products of skilled labor, was a poerful magnet. Steuart writes:

> Whence came so great a number of inhabitants all of a sudden? He who would have cast his eyes on the deserted residences of the nobility, would quickly have discovered the sources; he would there have seen the old people weeping and wailing, and nothing heard among them but complaints of desolation: the youth were retired to the city....
>
> This is no doubt a plain consequence of a sudden revolution... many of the numberous attendants of the nobility who uselessly filled every house and habitation belonging to the great man, were starving for want. He was at court, and calling aloud for

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9. James Steuart, An Inquiry Into the Principles of Political Economy, Ed. by Andrew Skinner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966) p. 56 & 57.

> for money, a thing he was seldom accustomed to have occasion for, except to lock up in his chest. In order to procure this money, he found it expedient to convert a portion of the personal services of his vassals into chas.... At last, the money spent in the city began to flow into the hands of the industrious: this raised an emulation and the children of the miserable, who had felt the sad effects of the revolution, but who could not forsee the consequences, began to profit by it. They became easy and independent in the great city, by furnishing to the extravagence of those under whose dominion they were born.[10]

A full two centuries ago, therefore, economists were concerned with the same problems that plague so many of our middle-sized metropolitan areas and their surrounding agricultural hinterland today. Increased agricultural efficiency creates a surplus farm labor pool that must migrate to the city to sustain itself. Cities subsequently grow faster than their ability to create new jobs and decent housing.

The close interrelationships between the rural economy and the city's economic health became the topic of considerable discussion. Malthus' Essay on Population, first appearing in the 1790's, for example, caused a considerable stir. Essentially Malthus asserted that population will increase geometrically if allowed to do so. Man's ability to produce food and wealth, however, Malthus claims, can increase only arithmatically. Malthus deduces that as population increases, per capita wealth decreases. Eventually starvation, pestilence and war will decrease the population.

In reaction to Malthus' work, at least one now obscure political economist wrote an essay which expanded on Steuart's work. Joseph Lowe, in his Present State of England, posits a theory on the generation of wealth which includes important hypotheses concerning the city and its rural hinterland.

Lowe claimed that Malthus was wrong in assuming agriculture can only increase its product arithmatically. Like the manufacture of the city, the production of the farm can increase through the applications of new techniques and devices. He concluded that there was little reason to assume that either the city or the farm is primary--"Hence the dependence of one class on another; hence; the prosperity caused to agriculture by the success of trade, and to trade by the success of agriculture. It is of no great consequence to our argument whether these wants are of first or of second necessity...."[11] The city and its agricultural hinterland are, for Lowe, one economic unit which increases its wealth through the division of labor.

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10. Ibid. p. 61
11. Joseph Lowe, The Present State of England. (London: Longman, Hartst et al, 1822)

One could write volumes describing the development of these basic ideas since the time of early political economicsts. The point is, however, that there has been precious little consideration given this knowledge by professional planners. For example, the work of the location theorists, such as Johann von Thunen, Alfred Weber, Walter Christaller and August Losche, were much concerned with the inter-relationships between the city and its rural service area. Planners, however, are either ignorant of such work or have chosen to abstract from it only those elements which reinforce their city bias.

The one economic tool planners have used extensively, Economic Base Analysis, although possibly useful in understanding the economic problems of rural towns, has been used only to analyze the city and primarily its manufacturing sector.

It is almost inconceivable, in fact, that planners, even given their urban bias, have not at least been exposed to the work of the geographers and rural sociologists describing the effect of urban development on the agricultural economy and rural towns. Planners see "urban sprawl" as deleterious for either aesthetic reasons or because it increases the cost or rendering urban services, not because it constitutes an unevaluated threat to the balance of the urban-rural economic system.

It would seem that the only way to increase the input of the above-mentioned knowledge in planning decisions is to make it a matter of public policy that metropolitan and regional planning agencies include on their staffs persons with the appropriate academic backgrounds. This will mean, in most cases, non-planners--or at least non-traditional planners. Such a proposal might raise the hackles of the professional planner, but it must be seriously considered.

A POSSIBLE SOLUTION

How can those concerned with the problems of rural areas bring pressure to bear on the public sector to effect the above-mentioned policy change and others that will be necessary to implement any sound plans resulting from truly comprehensive planning?

This is not a simple question to answer given the multiplicity of relevent theory describing the public decision-making process. There does, however, appear to be an increasing concensus that ours is a "pluralist" power system. The essential assumptions of the pluralist theorists are that:

1. Public decisions are made through a process involving interaction among many interest groups;
2. Government is just another interest group that is not really protecting the "public interest," but rather the interests of the governmental bureaucracy or elected official; and
3. In order, therefore, for any interest or particular problem to receive the attention of the public sector, it must be represented or brought to light by an organized group that can bargain and negotiate with the other groups in the power system.

Many may prefer to reject the cynicism of the true pluralists, but nearly all must agree that there is much in the world around us to support the main tenets of the pluralist credo. Government bureaucracies do seem more concerned with their own lot than with the general welfare. Organized interests do seem to receive more attention from government than the "average citizen," or "silent majority."

Such, at least, has been the experience of rural areas and small towns in the public planning process. There is no organization willing so it seems, to plead the case of these areas in public chambers issuing direction to planning programs. This is not to say rural areas are not organized, because they are--especially the farming interests. For some reason, however, (perhaps the same reason the conservationists avoided the early planning efforts), the existing spokesmen for rural areas have not exerted pressure to open up planning offices to include those knowledgeable about the rural economy and its problems.

How can this situation be remedied?

Given our pluralist system, the most direct method of increasing the influence of under-represented groups is to increase their own self-awareness. This means education--education aimed at raising the consciousness of a community to the point where it recognizes and seeks to actualize its self-interest in public decisions.

As already stated, rural areas have influential organizations in existence; but these have chosen to ignore public planning as a device to actualize the interests of their constituencies.

The leaders of these groups and their constituents must be sensitized to the fact that public planning is crucial to their interests; that today's planning decisions precipitate the forces which create tomorrow's crises. This educational, consciousness-raising function must be a high, if not the highest, proprity in community development efforts. This was the function of the MIDNY Project in its six year experiment in the Central New York Region.

RURAL PLANNING LESSONS FROM THE CENTRAL N.Y. EXPERIENCE

Background

The MIDNY Project was not a "rural planning" effort. However, among other experiments it did attempt to bolster comprehensive planning in the small community and rural portions of Central New York. This was done through "community education",[12] carried out in close harmony with planning efforts.

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12. "Community education" as carried out by MIDNY on a regional (multi-county) basis approximated the process described in "Reflections on COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION", a 60 page publication by Prof. Austin E. Bennett, Extension Service, University of Maine, Orono, Maine, 1969.

The MIDNY Project was initiated as a pilot effort in 1966, and terminates July 1, 1972. MIDNY (for mid New York) was funded by the Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and administered by Cooperative Extension of Cornell University. It operated for the first three years with a staff of four professionals. Two community resource development specialists and a full time secretary were located in Syracuse in the heart of the five county region. Two support Extension Associates were campus based at Cornell University.

MIDNY got underway simultaneously with regional planning, and had some initial built-in relationship to the Central New York Regional Planning Board. As a result, it soon developed a focus on a broad objective of "increasing the effectiveness of comprehensive planning at all appropriate levels." The project recognized the inevitability of increased planning throughout the region. It also noted very early that traditional comprehensive planning programs tend to generate much information, and that resulting planning documents frequently are not used by local officials---and not even known to the vast majority of leaders at the small community level.

In addition to education carried out regionally by MIDNY staff, the project also helped county Extension develop and carry out educational activities of a county or local nature. During the first three years, the backstopping associates developed linkages with resources at Cornell University and elsewhere, as the program experimented with community education on a broad array of public problems pertinent to regional planning and development underway in the five counties.[13]

During the second three year phase of the program, the project operated without the backstopping Extension Associates. Instead, it utilized available University assistance and relied heavily on resources from within the region. This program support was developed primarily through the use of loosely structured ad hoc committees, focused on specific issues.[14]

After considerable exploring, including trial and error educational efforts early in the program, the staff became convinced that the traditional process of comprehensive planning did not encourage widespread involvement by agency professionals and rural community leaders.

Many leaders in small communities, even elected officials, were faced with day to day incremental decisions. The decision making process utilized in rural areas tended to require a constant flow of information on a problem by problem basis.

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13. For a three year evaluation, see MIDNY: The First Three Years, Community Resource Development in a Complex, Metropolitan Setting, by Dr. Alan J. Hahn, Dept. of Consumer Economics, College of Human Ecology, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

14. For an analysis of program processes and results, see MIDNY, an Evaluation of a Pilot Extension program in COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, a 90 page report (also available in condensed version) by Dr. William J. Kimball, Dept. of Resource Development, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, 1970 (while a visiting Professor of Rural Sociology Department, Cornell University).

In contrast, traditional comprehensive planning processes tended to fucus more on a master plan, which when documented was used to prescribe, and to some extent control decisions. The time span between the emergence of a problem and completion of a relevant plan, seemed to mitigate against full use of planning information on day to day decisions---which in total tended to direct development of rural communities.

In view of these suspected planning weaknesses, MIDNY's educational activities were aimed to increase involvement and participation in the decision making process on public issues. When successful, local leaders were helped to make public decisions by their interaction with county and regional planning staffs, in educational activities on relevant local problems, while awaiting the eventual plan.

What I am saying is that community education resulted in a vast communication increase among elected officials, planning offices, local organizations, and agency professionals. This fostered a working rapport, and trust for planning. Planning became accepted by a variety of agencies that work with rural people, which affected the decisions that local leaders made in legislative deliberations and the day to day operation of programs.

Some Problems Encountered

Though MIDNY operated in a predominately metropolitan setting, a number of activities were carried out in rural settings. This provided insight into effective planning processes for rural areas. Perhaps a starting point is to recognize that traditional planning approaches (the master plan technique) is unpopular with rural leaders, who also dislike commonly used implementing tools---zoning ordinances, building codes, etc. These tools, though useful, do not strike at the crux on many rural problems---economic decline, outmigration of talented youth, poor public facilities and others.

Planners and community developers may be at odds on this issue. As recorded in notes of a regional meeting of key agency representatives, including planners, studying a rural township plan, "...a gap between comprehensive planning and action in rural areas seems almost inevitable in view of the lack of pressure for change. Some questioned whether traditional comprehensive planning is needed under these circumstances. Others felt that planning is valuable, and that implementation tools are relevant to help guide development when and if it does occur---or to encourage development. Some suggested that planning techniques and processes might have to be altered in very rural situations to be relevant to perceived problems of local leaders."[15]

Equally important is the problem of adjusting traditional agency programs to help rural leaders cope with contemporary problems. As brought out by Dr. Hanselman of the SUNY College of Forestry, "...Most of these (natural resource) agencies were created long before the

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15. February 17, 1971 memo from author to seventeen planners and agency professionals reviewing planning approaches utilized in a declining rural town in Madison County, N.Y.

burning conservation issues of today were even thought of. Hence we find that most of our governmental agencies are rural in nature and entrenched in channels with definitions of responsibility which frequently prevent action on the major conservation battlefields of today. For example, more than a dozen federal agencies concern themselves with various aspects of tree planting. But, one would be hardput to find more than a handful of federal employees whose job descriptions include responsibilities for returning waste and scrap metals to production, or educating the public about the relationship between the population explosion and natural resources."[16]

A Process Emerges

Over time, the MIDNY Project observed that significant agency representatives, and other leaders, tended to affect decisions on regional matters from six broad vantage points---that of promotion, service, regulation, financing, education, and planning. This permitted a structured programming process, for initiating and carrying out regional community education. It encouraged key persons from each of these governmental functions to interact in ad hoc committees. This led to what eventually was described as a "campaign-coalition approach to programming, backstopped by ad hoc committees focused on public issues." This process seemed adaptable to rural situations.

By the use of this process in rural areas, key individuals from each of the identified six areas of influence, can study specific local issues. This ad hoc group can develop an understanding and description of the issue, and help a community educator carry out educational efforts involving a broad cross-section of leadership.

The selection of these educational efforts, and their timing, may complement comprehensive planning. For example, the issues to be focused on and the timing of the educational activities, can be manipulated to be of greatest benefit to planning efforts. In time, these educational efforts guide leaders into a process of planning.

Also, the planner can adapt a planning process to address perceived needs of rural communities, and tailor it to their way of problem solving. In other words, this approach enables planning to fit the existing decision making process of a rural community, rather than attempt to change the process to meet planning needs.

This program development process is diagrammed on the following page, based on MIDNY's experiences.[17]

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16. Hanselman, Dr. David L., Continuing Education Dept., SUNY College of Forestry at Syracuse University, "The New Conservation", an article in Winter 1967 edition of EVENT, a Journal of Public Affairs, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y. 13210.
17. For details of this model, see MIDNY Working Paper #8, A Working Concept of Region Development, by the author (Anderson).

A CONCEPT OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

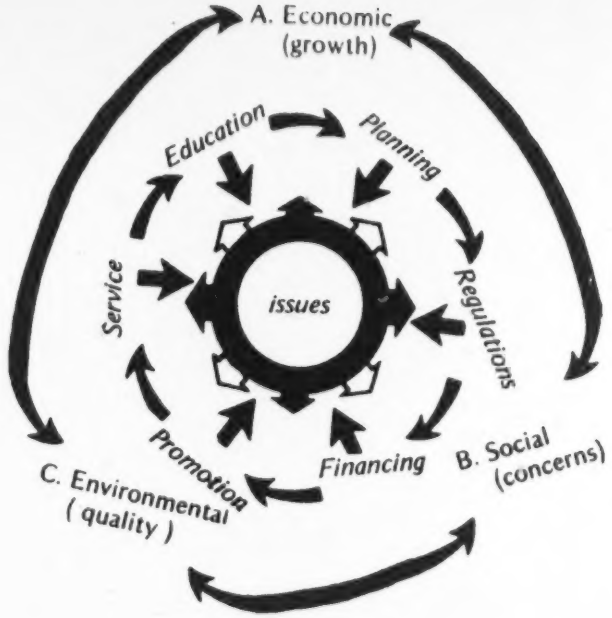
Legend

A., B., C., --- conflicting societal values that must be weighed in making major decisions

A. *Economic* (growth) -- production, employment, expansion, rising standard of living, material goods.

B. *Social* (concerns) -- decent housing, education, adequate food, a job, a minimum standard of living for all.

C. *Environment* (quality) -- clean air & water, outdoor recreation, attractive communities, protection of wild species, population balance, life style diversity.



Governmental response ---
Education
Planning
Regualtion
Financing
Promotion
Service

issues-- the catalyst that stimulates movement - creates conflict

pressure or movement

Description of Model Diagram

This diagram describes the decision making process on several major community problems in central New York, and formed the basis for MIDNY's educational activities. It predicts that:

1. A community will be influenced at any point in time by a variety of conflicting problems---such as economic growth, social concerns (welfare), and environmental quality, in this example. Decisions made about these matters are heavily influenced by values of the decision maker, and his constituents. Knowledge about these values, and major contemporary problems, is critical to planning in rural areas.

2. Public decisions in rural areas are forced by conflict and stress. This stress is reflected by "issues" which emerge from time to time. These issues are revealed by mass media coverage of community happenings and by personal acquaintenances with "informal leaders".

3. Numerous public agencies are forced to respond to issues (or become irrelevant and vulnerable to rediction in program funding). These responses reflect the primary functions of the responding agency. In Central New York these were identified by the MIDNY staff as that of planning, regulations (enforcement), financing, promotion, service, and education.

These functions, and areas of responsibility are not this clear-cut. Hence, an agency representative becomes defensive of program boundaries, fears competition, and rejects efforts to "coordinate" governmental response---unless he can become the coordinator.

4. Friction and competition provides a favorable climate for interagency communication, which can be brought about by a community educational process. The ad hoc committee approach utilized by MIDNY seemed effective.

5. Ad hoc committees focused on specific problems with short range objectives---resolving a solid waste management problem, organizing agricultural districts, forming environmental management councils, setting up a non-profit low-income housing corporation, etc.

Of equal importance, planners and other agency professionals learned how to work together in problem solving. They developed a planning process that was effective in rural areas. It was problem oriented, and structured to alter agency priorities, program processes, and outmoded goals and objectives. It pressured agencies to adjust program efforts to more effectively deal with contemporary problems.

The model developed by the MIDNY Project seemed effective in the Central New York urbanizing region. It was further tested in southern

Illinois during the winter of 1971-72 and determined to be relevant to a more rural, economically depressed planning region.[18] The total six years experience concerning rural planning is summarized at the front of this report, under Conclusions.

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18. For details see MIDNY Case Study #11, Testing the MIDNY Project Pilot Results in The Greater Egypt Region of Southern Illinois; a fifteen page mimeo, by the author (Anderson).

Presentation Outline

AN EFFECTIVE PROCESS FOR RURAL PLANNING--

Martin Anderson and Dr. Ralph Catalano

I. Details on co-authorship of paper

II. Available supportive materials:
   1) Coalitions of Agencies and Organizations---into the planning process, a paper presented by the author and planning director Robert C. Morris to a recent Cooperative Extension---AIP workshop in Virginia on non-metropolitan planning.

   2) MIDNY Case Study #1--Agricultural Preservation in Central New York; an evaluative example of an extensive program of community education, carried out on a regional basis over a period of several years.

   3) MIDNY Case Study #2--Testing the MIDNY Project Results in the Greater Egypt Planning Region of Southern Illinois; an evaluation of the Central N.Y. experiences in another region.

III. Presentation format:
   1) Background

   2) 10 min. slide-tape introduction to the C.N.Y. experience

   3) Brief presentation highlighting major points from joint paper---to set the scene for discussion

   4) Questions - for clarification or elaboration

   5) Group discussion

THE CENTRAL NEW YORK EXPERIENCE*

CONCLUSIONS

We do not want to imply that the Central New York experience is the approach to foster agency cooperation in comprehensive planning. But it is one approach, and it has worked for us. In this presentation we have tried to share with you the experiences of two independent organizations, performing different but closely interwoven functions. We have spoken from the perspectives of the regional planning director and the community resource development specialist.

Planners and extension people have differences in terminology and techniques, but our similarities are much more significant. Neither of us claims to be an expert on a particular subject, but both of us advocate processes and devote our energies to making expertise available to the decision-maker. Perhaps in this role extension emphasizes helping the expert get into a dialogue with the decision-maker, while the planner concentrates on helping the decision-maker evaluate and use the material all the experts have given him. But we're both somewhere in the middle, and even then the gap is sometimes difficult to close.

Much information is available about the Central New York experience. All major program components of the MIDNY Project have been written up as working papers and case studies, to document the results of the six years of experimental work in regional community education and to make the findings available for use elsewhere. Annual reports and others of the Regional Planning Board also set forth the extent of the board's efforts and success at achieving inter-agency participation and involvement.

Our Central New York experience has convinced us that no organization or agency working alone can be nearly as effective as several working together. We must learn, as agency professionals, to help develop coalitions around specific issues which will help our mutual client, the community, obtain maximum benefit from all available resources. This agency imput must be made through a locally recognized and supported comprehensive regional planning program. The pieces are there, but "putting it all together" is no simple task. Leaders in Central New York have come a long way in the past six years. We feel we're on the right track.

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* From a paper presented jointly by Central New York Regional Planning Director Robert C. Morris and Cooperative Extension Specialist Martin G. Anderson of the MIDNY Project: both of Syracuse New York, to a June 18-22, 1972 national [illegible] Teamwork for Nonmetropolitan Planning, in Williamsburg, Va.; co-sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service and the American Institute of Planners.

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